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The development of a multimedia online resource for study skills development aimed to aid transition of students to higher education

Student Dissertation

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SAT: The development of a multimedia online resource for study skills development aimed to aid transition of students to higher education. (Paul Hubbard)

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Successful transition of students from school/college to higher education (HE) is becoming an important focus of university policy and research. A number of studies have discussed the importance of successful transition to HE as well as the factors that influence this transition (Ferguson *et al.*, 2002; Briggs *et al.*, 2012). One of the factors that has arisen from such research is the need to develop study skills in students so that they can adapt to, and thrive, in the independent learning environment of HE.

The artefact to be discussed in the conference presentation will be the development of an innovative multimedia online resource. The purpose of this artefact is to help aid this transition from school to HE. The online resource will initially be targeted to the study skills required by medical students to help them to become successful in their medical studies. However, it may be possible to adapt to a wider audience considering the ubiquitous nature of study skills needs. Since the resource is designed to aid transition it will be available to students who have a confirmed offer prior to study. The presentation will explain how the design of the online resource will help students to understand expectations on the course as well as allow them the opportunity to develop their skills prior to commencing studies. The resource will be based on a constructivist learning theory. The rationale for this approach will be explained in the presentation since a constructivist approach to learning allows students to actively explore and develop their own individual learning approach based on prior experience (Petty, 2009).

This is different to many other academic/study skills strategies that tend to keep to the transmission model of teaching (Wingate and Dreiss, 2009).

The content of the artefact has been established through incorporating a number of networking methodological approaches in order to inform and develop the structure and content of the resource. Strategies such as; student focus groups, online collaborative documents, social media, online and face-to-face fora, the open studio and professional networking sites were utilised in this method.

The presentation will explain how this development process has progressed and will discuss the outcomes of utilising these networking strategies in informing development. Adaptations such as; moving towards an integrative approach rather than a standalone resource, inclusion

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of subject specific activities, incorporating quizzes, questionnaires and other interactive elements have all been a result of this networking process. To illustrate how the resource will work the presentation will also include a demonstration of some key aspects of the resource explain how it will work.

Future development would hope to complete the integration of the resource with other teaching strategies such as lectures and seminars in order to consolidate the process and further aid transition. It is hoped the resource will form a key aspect of improving student transition to university and to aid in academic achievement.

References for abstract

Briggs ARJ., Clark J., and Hall I. (2012) 'Building Bridges: understanding student transition to university', *Quality in Higher Education*, iFirst article, pp 1-19, DOI:10.1080/13538322.2011.614468 [Online]. Available at <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/13538322.2011.614468#.VK2wHnsUND8> (Accessed 1st January 2015).

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Petty G. (2009) *Teaching Today A Practical Guide*, Fourth Edition, Cheltenham, UK, Nelson Thornes.

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[Lisa Kidger](#)

7:17pm 14 January 2015 [Permalink](#)

Hi Paul

That sounds very interesting. At work students often struggle with the transition from level 3 to level 6 and I would be interested in how it could be expanded to other subjects.

Lisa



[Paul Hubbard](#)

10:01pm 14 January 2015 [Permalink](#)

Hello Lisa,

Thanks for the comment. I think the resource will be available to be expanded to other subjects. I think for things like this to work fully there needs to be some element of subject-specific design, but a lot of the information will also be transferable to other subject areas. So maybe a template/principle could be established that could then be adapted to suit different subject streams.

Best wishes,
Paul



[Stefanie Anyadi](#)

5:38pm 24 January 2015 [Permalink](#)

Sounds great, Paul, and there is a lot of interest in this, not only for students moving from secondary school to university but also for students coming to a UK university from abroad for a Masters programme or as exchange students. Have you seen the work done by London Metropolitan, see <http://learning.londonmet.ac.uk/epacks/studyhub/>? and the self-diagnostic test developed at Exeter, see http://as.exeter.ac.uk/support/staffdevelopment/aspectsacademicpractice/assessmentandfeedback/work-integratedassessmentthecollaborateproject/the_itest_how_digittally_literate_are_you_/?



[Jocelyn Anderson](#)

8:30pm 24 January 2015 [Permalink](#)

Hi Paul,

Your networking processes sound extraordinary, I'm really looking forward to hearing more about them - this sounds like the culmination of an enormous amount of work. I'm particularly curious about how the artefact works alongside face to face learning - that is, how does/might it work once students begin their courses? Are there any face to face study skills sessions? As for subject-specific streams - well, as someone who teaches art history, a tiny discipline in the wider university context, I love the idea of a proof of principle...

Best wishes,

Jocelyn



[Samantha Marks](#)

7:03pm 26 January 2015 [Permalink](#)

A constructivist multimedia tool for aiding learning - sounds interesting! I am looking forward to hearing the presentation Paul, as I agree this is an area of great importance, and I am interested in how we could do this, without placing even more study on the student themselves. 20 years ago when I went to University, we were not given any instructions on how to study or change our habits. I do feel that in this respect distance

learners often get better support. When you look at the resources that the OU offers to students about study skills, structuring essays etc it is amazing.



[Paul Hubbard](#)

6:10pm 27 January 2015 [Permalink](#)

Hello Everyone,

Thanks for all your really helpful comments. I'm hoping this resource will work alongside traditional lectures and seminars to aid the transition from school to university. Also, the comments you are making fit quite nicely with the information I'm hoping to portray during the presentation so hopefully I'll answer your questions fully at the conference presentation :)



[Dr Simon Ball](#)

3:37pm 9 February 2015 [Permalink](#)

Here are the comments and questions from your live presentation at the conference:

- ▶ i think this is because while at universities we have some awesome researchers not all are good teachers as my intro to teaching and learning in HE was naff, it was really thought of as a sideline not a necessity. If you as the teacher don't understand learning then the students certainly wont. - This was remedied for me by MA ODE :D
- ▶ There is a great MOOC on FutureLearn on 'Preparing for Uni'...
- ▶ How much input does an individual student give about what their personal needs might be?
- ▶ University of Derby Online has a "freshers module" on study skills which is compulsory even for old hands like me. It was really worthwhile
- ▶ I suppose nowadays there is an overlap with digital literacy skills...?
- ▶ it can be an issue that students think they don't need it and are really resentful if forced to participate; most benefit though
- ▶ new students often struggle with concept of having one or two days 'free' they don't always appreciate that they should be doing something outside of lectures
- ▶ involving the students is great to make sure it'll be taken up by others
- ▶ How did you evaluate this lovely work?
- ▶ have you considered what might be the barriers to using it? will this reach the students who really need it
- ▶ Was it challenging to recruit students to participate in your focus group?
- ▶ Secondary schools went through a phase of discussing 'meta-cognition'. Did you consider using the term?
- ▶ How supportive is your institution in this?
- ▶ Not much time given to discussing study skills and organisation at secondary school. Should we explore how we organise and schedule learning To share more ideas and best practice?

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